



## *Enhancing Aruba's Hospitality Management Training*

ATA announces the upcoming CATA conference as an opportunity to educate

The EPI (Educacion Professional Intermedio) school of Aruba, considered one of the top Hospitality Management and Tourism training facilities in the Caribbean, hosted a press conference in their restaurant with AHATA and ATA staff on Wednesday afternoon, May 2.

The purpose of the gathering was twofold, not only to announce the commencement of the important CATA (Conferencia Annual de Turismo de Aruba) Conference on May 6, which will welcome over 100 travel experts from Latin America, but also the active participation of EPI students and those of Colegio Frere Bonifacio during the event.

Marvel Vilchez of AHATA and Mario Arends of the ATA along with Micheline Rojer representing EPI joined Assistant Marketing Director of the Aruba Tourism Authority, Miriam Dabian in presenting the CATA program. They remarked that wholesalers and airline executives from South and Central America are well acquainted with Aruba, and so each CATA challenges organizers to present different aspects of the island and greater insight into the culture beyond the beaches. Towards this purpose, they have challenged the students of EPI and to prepare a presentation for the delegates on the Monday of the conference. This will be the entertainment during a luncheon that will be held at the EPI facility. Student chefs of the EPI will prepare the luncheon under the supervision of their professional instructors, and the students will serve, giving them a professional tourism working experience. In turn, conference organizers feel this will provide an insight to the conference attendees to the quality of training that future hospitality management executives and chefs are receiving in Aruba at the EPI, which welcomes students from all over the Caribbean, Latin America and United States.

The CATA schedule will entail a very busy three days of workshops, hotel inspections, and include a specially organized Cultural Festival at the Colegio Frere Bonifacio. This will give other island “high-school” students an opportunity to create presentations and show their pride in their island and its culture. It is expected to provide a unique and memorable experience for the visiting delegates and the students.

ATA and AHATA representatives expressed that the involvement of Aruba’s youth in the CATA and other conferences is an important exchange that helps to bring the reality of the tourism product to those that will likely affect it in the future. Aruba’s chief source of income is not a reality for many young people until they are finished with their schooling, and are unsure of their professional direction. By recruiting our youth, they feel they will not only improve the experience for conference attendees, but also facilitate young people in realizing what working in the tourism sector truly entails, provide them with motivation, and improve their education and preparation for future careers.